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REMARKS

Claims 1-29, as amended, remain herein. Claims 4 and 12-28 are withdrawn from consideration. The claims before the Examiner for consideration are claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29.

Applicants appreciate the statements in the Office Action that claims 3 and 5-11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the respective independent claim from which they depend, and if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. It is respectfully submitted that all examined claims are allowable for the reasons given below.

Claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29 have been amended for clarity, as described herein.

1. The original Abstract has been replaced with a substitute Abstract.

2. The drawings were objected to for allegedly (1) showing an incorrect sectional plane symbol and (2) not illustrating all of the claim elements. Submitted herewith are

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replacement sheets of Figures 2-6 showing sectional numerals AA-EE replaced by I-I through V-V. Figure 2 now shows groove 33a for cooperating with rib 33, as described in the specification, as revised, at page 9, line 33. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The specification, page 7, lines 13-26, has been amended to replace sectional numerals AA-EE with I-I through V-V (responsive to numbered paragraph 8 in the Office Action).

The specification, page 8, line 15, has been changed to read "in a circular groove 12a of the seat 12", and page 8, lines 24-25 have been amended to read "profile 18 that co-operates with a portion 19a having a matching profile 19", as shown in Fig. 9 (responsive to numbered paragraph 8 in the Office Action).

The specification, page 9, lines 32-33, has been amended to read "rib 33 co-operating with a matching circular groove 33a", corresponding to Figure 2 (responsive to numbered paragraph 8 in the Office Action).

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3. The drawings were further objected (see numbered paragraph 9 of the Office Action) for allegedly not showing external profile 18 being disengaged from matching profile 19 as recited in claim 7. Submitted herewith is a new Figure 9 showing a longitudinal section of the embodiment shown in Figure 2, but in a disengaged position. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The drawings were criticized for not showing circular groove on a surface of bore 20, as recited in claim 10. As noted above, Figure 2 has been changed to show groove 33a for cooperating with rib 33.

Profiles 18 and 19 were said to be shown as not disengaged from each other. Proposed new Figure 9 shows such disengagement, and clarifies portion 19a having profile 19, cooperatively engaging profile 18.

The Examiner also stated correctly that the groove 31 allegedly is not arranged on the cylindrical surface of the internal bore 20. The specification, at page 9, lines 25-27, describes groove 31 as arranged between the cylindrical surface 28 at one end of chamber 27 and cylindrical bore 20 delimited by

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the tips. Claim 9 recites groove (31) arranged at one end of chamber (27), which corresponds to the description in the specification at page 9, lines 25-27, and Figure 2. Claim 10 recites a separate groove, now 33a, for engaging rib 33, as shown on proposed amended Figure 2.

4. The specification was edited to include subtitles as requested.

The matter in numbered paragraph 11 (b) were discussed above.

5. Claims 2, 3 and 5-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly containing subject matter not sufficiently described in the specification. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The specification at page 8, lines 20-23, describes tips 15 as integral with tube 10 thusly:

The end of the tube 10 that is in the vicinity of the seat 12 incorporates four tips 15 separated by slits 16. The slits 16 are of a length selected so as to give the tips 15 a certain bending flexibility.

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The phrase "end of the tube...incorporates four tips" establishes that the tube and four tips are integral. Figure 2 shows tube 10 as hatched and tips 15 as not hatched, because Figure 2 is a longitudinal section along plane II-II in Figure 3. Plane II-II passes through slits 16, and therefore, the tips are not hatched, according to accepted drawing practice. A plane going through any non-slit region would show both tube and tips as similarly hatched, because they are integral and such a view would show a continuous, integral surface at that particular sectional view.

Claim 3 has been amended to recite "wherein the locking means comprise: a tube portion integral with one end of the locking means for retaining the second mechanical element; and at least two deformable tips integral with an opposite end of the lacking means...".

Page 8, last full paragraph of the Office Action, contains a mention of disengagement of tips from matching profile 19. New Figure 9 shows such disengagement, and corresponding edits have been made to the specification.

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The Examiner questioned claim 10 reciting a groove and assumed the groove to be groove 31. Amended Figure 2 shows groove 33a, for engaging rib 33, to which the wording of claim 10 is addressed.

6. The objection to claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29 for containing a typographical error has been overcome by making the necessary change.

7. Claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. the claims as they now read are definite.

The claims have been amended to clarify "axis" and "profile", and the word "it" has been replaced.

The claims have been reformatted to remove reference numerals and the claimed elements have been reworded to agree with the Figures. To advance prosecution and in view of those numerous changes, selected claimed elements are described below in association with the figures:

locking means relates to element (10),

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first mechanical element relates to element (11),

second mechanical element relates to element (9),

(claim 2) locking means has at least one first surface having a profile (18), cooperating with a second surface (19) of first mechanical element (11) having a matching profile,

(claim 2) locking means comprises an axial bore (20) for slidably receiving the piston (21),

(claim 3) locking means comprises a tube portion (10) integral with one end of the locking means for retaining the second mechanical element (9) and further comprises at least two deformable tips (15) integral with an opposite end of the locking means, said tips having external profiles (18).

8. Claims 1, 2 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over Camp DE 19617372.

The presently claimed unlockable mechanical linking device comprises at least one locking means having an axial bore, a retention means comprising a piston having a first external surface and capable of sliding in such axial bore, as recited by

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applicants' claim 1. This arrangement is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited reference.

Camp DE '372 is alleged to disclose two mechanical elements 26 and 18, retention means 44 comprising piston 38 able to slide in axial bore 35, the locking means 35 being in contact with piston 38 at its external cylindrical surface. However, using such characterizations of the Camp DE '372 components, Fig. 2, shows "piston 38" integral with mechanical element 26. Element 26 begins at the left of Camp DE '372, Fig. 2, and continues uninterrupted toward the right, including a hatched sectional view 38 at its wider, rightmost end. Camp DE '372, Fig. 2, shows "retention means 44" as left-to-right hatched and located outside element 34, which is shown as right-to-left hatched, and "piston 38" is located inside of element 34. Thus, "piston 38" is not part of "retention means 44", because element 34 (an outside element) is located between "piston 38" and "retention means 44". Accordingly, using the characterizations of the Examiner, "retention means 44" does not comprise "piston 38", as recited in applicants' claim 1.

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Applicants submit further that Camp DE '372, Fig. 2, logically shows piston 44 is subject to gas pressure coming from pyrotechnical element by way of space 54. Camp DE '372, Fig. 2, also shows locking means 40 contacting the internal surface of piston 44, and not its external surface, as recited by applicants' claim 1. Camp DE'372, Fig. 2, does not show at least one locking means having an axial bore, a retention means comprising a piston having a first external surface and capable of sliding in such axial bore, as recited by applicants' claim 1. In short, the Camp DE'372 piston is a sleeve having a bore inside of which locking means 40 and piston 44 slide, while the presently claimed piston does the reverse, i.e., the piston slides inside the axial bore of the locking means.

For the foregoing reasons, Camp DE '372 fails to disclose all elements of applicants' claimed invention, and therefore is not a proper basis for rejection under §102. And, there is no disclosure or teaching in Camp DE '372 that would have suggested the desirability of modifying any portions thereof effectively to suggest applicants' presently claimed invention. Claims 2 and 29, which depend from claim 1 are allowable for the same

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reasons as claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Enclosed to complete the record is a copy of DE 195 15 852 A1, the prior art mentioned on page 1, line 10 of the specification.

All claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29 are now proper in form and patentably distinguish over all grounds of rejection cited in the Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of all claims 1-3, 5-11 and 29 is respectfully requested.

Not
considered
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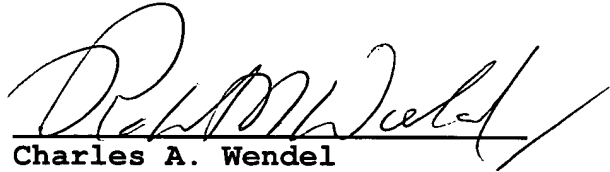
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Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the applicants would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' undersigned representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

PARKHURST & WENDEL, L.L.P.

May 14, 2003
Date


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Attachments: DE 195 15 852 A1
4 replacement sheets (Figures 2-7)
1 sheet new Figure 9

Attorney Docket No.: CELA:082

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